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College of Physicians and Surgeons

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Post, Alfred C. Esq. G. M. Smith M. D.

PROF. ALFRED C. POST.

ADDRESS.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF THE

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

IN THE

CITY OF NEW YORK,

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE,

AT THE

NINTH ANNUAL MEETING, MARCH 15, 1867,

BY

ALFRED C. POST, M. D.

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College of Physicians and Surgeons

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

EDWARD DELAFIELD, M. D., PRESIDENT,
EDWARD L. BEADLE, M. D., VICE-PRESIDENT,
GURDON BUCK, M. D., REGISTRAR,
FLOYD SMITH, TREASURER,
AND TWENTY-FIVE TRUSTEES.

WZ 270 M6 R708 P84 1867

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ALEXANDER H. STEVENS, M. D., LL. D.,
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Assistant to the Professor of Physiology.

JAMES L. BROWN, M. D.,
Assistant to the Professor of Obstetrics.

THOMAS DENHAM,
Clerk of the College.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen, Alumni of the College of Physicians and Surgeons :

Your Alma Mater summons you here this evening to celebrate her sixtieth birthday. Although she has reached the age of threescore years, she shows no signs of decaying strength. Her face is not wrinkled, "her eye is not dim, nor is her natural force abated." She rejoices in her numerous family, and from each annual brood of her offspring she derives renewed health and vigor, as the parent trunk of the banian tree receives new life and strength from the offshoots by which its branches communicate with the earth. On this auspicious occasion, she invites her sons to lay aside their ordinary avocations, and to assemble beneath the maternal roof, that she and they may rejoice together in their common prosperity, and may talk together of the days of "Auld lang syne."

The days of her life have been among the most eventful which have been recorded in the annals of time. During the sixty years which have elapsed since she came into existence, the application of steam to the propulsion of vessels on rivers, and lakes, and seas, and oceans, has effected a most important revolution in the commerce of the world. The construction of railroads, and of trains of cars drawn by locomotives, has brought remote regions into close proximity, and the time is rapidly approaching when the iron horse shall traverse an unbroken chain of communication across our vast continent from ocean to ocean, completing with ease, within a week or ten days, a line of travel which, but a few years ago, consumed weary months, and exposed the hardy pioneers who undertook it to extraordinary perils and privations. During the same eventful period, the electric telegraph has

brought into instantaneous communication with each other the dwellers on the shores of the Atlantic and Pacific, and of all the intervening regions. The nations of Europe and America now hold daily intercourse along the mysterious wire which lies imbedded in the sands beneath old ocean's waves. Over the vast expanse of field and flood, of hill and valley, of mountain and plain, through the streets of populous cities, and throughout the vast solitudes of nature, is stretched the wire by which intelligence is conveyed over the world with a speed compared with which the flight of the eagle darting down upon his prey is as the crawling of a worm upon the ground. This same period has given birth to the photographic art, by which all visible objects are capable of being delineated in a few seconds with a fidelity, an accuracy, and a minuteness of detail with which no artist's pencil could compete. Thus the great imponderable agents, heat, light, and electricity, have been brought into the service of man, and have accomplished his bidding in a manner, and to a degree, of which no man ever dreamed in past ages. The results which have already been accomplished by these ethereal and mysterious agents are of the most stupendous character, and the imagination is almost overwhelmed by the contemplation of the future triumphs which human intellect is destined to achieve by the agency of these subtle forces, which are so inscrutable in their nature, but so mighty in their results. The last sixty years have been characterized by an advancement in the arts and sciences vastly exceeding that which has taken place during any equal period of time in the history of our race. It would occupy more time than could be properly employed on an occasion like this, to recount the details of the remarkable advancement to which allusion has been made. But we may profitably occupy a few moments in glancing over a few of the leading improvements which have occurred. The extensive introduction of machinery in an immense variety of forms, to take the place of manual labor, has exerted a mighty influence in multiplying the power of man over the elements of nature, and in increasing the material results of human industry. The numerous and highly ingenious agricultural implements which have been introduced within a few years, have to a great extent revolutionized our system of agriculture, and have astonishingly increased the productions of the earth, and added to the wealth and substantial comforts of the human race. The

improvements which have been introduced into the printing-press have added vastly to the power of this important agent, and have given to it an incalculable influence in advancing human intelligence, and adding to the sum of human knowledge. Corresponding improvements have been made in mining and metallurgy and in all the mechanic arts, giving to human labor a value and a power which it never before possessed. The introduction of the sewing machine has added greatly to the productiveness of human labor in the department to which it belongs, and has served to emancipate woman from a large part of the oppressive toil and drudgery to which she was exposed. When we contemplate the beneficent results which have flowed from this useful invention, we may well unite with our mothers and sisters, and wives and daughters, in rendering thanks to the Giver of all good for the alleviation of care and toil, and the increase of substantial enjoyment to which it has given rise. The introduction of caoutchouc and gutta percha, and the important and constantly multiplying uses which are made of them, may be enumerated among the substantial improvements of the period which we are contemplating. It is almost superfluous to speak of the progress which has been made in the art of war. The comparison of a wooden ship, propelled by the wind and armed with 32 or 64-pounders, with a Monitor or a Dunderberg with its tremendous engines of destruction, may suffice to show the advancement which has been made within a very few years.

In every department of science as well as of art, a corresponding progress has been made. The students of nature have pushed their researches to a point far in advance of that which had been gained by their predecessors. And the knowledge thus acquired has not been confined within the walls of universities, nor within the breasts of a limited number of scientific men, but it has been widely diffused throughout the community. Popular education has been extended much more widely during the last sixty years than in any preceding age; and thus an impulse has been communicated to the popular mind, tending greatly to the increase of its powers, and the enlargement of its acquisitions in coming years.

During the period which we have been considering, great changes have taken place in the political condition of the world. At the commencement of this period, Napoleon the 1st, in his

imperial glory, reigned with undisputed power over the French nation, and exerted a mighty influence over the destinies of Europe, making and unmaking kings at his pleasure.

George III. in England was approaching the end of his long and eventful reign, presenting the sad spectacle of a mind in ruins.

Alexander I. was the emperor of Russia, and the resources of his great empire were taxed to their utmost in contending with Napoleon.

Germany was divided into a great number of principalities. The leading governments were those of Austria and Prussia, which were allied with Russia in efforts to circumscribe the power of the French emperor. Within a few years, the mighty emperor at whose nod monarchs trembled on their thrones, was a captive exile on the rock-bound island of St. Helena. The Bourbon family returned to Paris, and resumed its regal authority. It had forgotten nothing; it had learned nothing. The reins of government fell from its hands, and Louis Philippe of Orleans was seated on the throne. After a few years there was another popular uprising; the old king was dethroned, the royal family driven into exile, and the French Republic was organized. Louis Napoleon was elected President; and by a coup d'état he seized the reins of imperial government, and has since exercised a power in Europe hardly inferior to that of his illustrious uncle.

England has passed through the reigns of George IV. and William IV., and has for many years been governed by the enlightened queen who now presides over its destinies. It has extended its commerce and increased its wealth, but its relative position among the great powers of Europe is less influential than it was sixty years ago.

Russia has gone on increasing in population, in civilization, and in material resources. And it has only been restrained by the other great powers of Europe from indulging its long-cherished appetite for Turkey, and from extending its limits to the Bosphorus. Its eye is still directed to the south, and with eager expectation it is waiting for its manifest destiny. The reign of the present emperor, Alexander II., has been distinguished by that great act of generosity and of justice by which the millions of its serfs were raised to the dignity and independence of freemen. His name will be cherished among those of the

great benefactors of our race, and the blessings of unborn generations will rest on his memory.

The changes which have taken place in Germany during the last year are so fresh in the memory of all who hear me, that it is hardly necessary to allude to them. Few events in the history of the world have been more startling in their character, and the prospective results of these great changes are matters of great and absorbing interest. And there is great reason to hope that the time is not far distant when a united Germany shall stand before the world in its fair proportions, and shall exert the power and influence to which the numbers and intelligence of its people justly entitle it.

Italy has passed through a series of revolutions culminating, during the last year, in the separation of Venetia from the Austrian Empire, and the consolidation of the whole peninsula, with the exception of the limited territory attached to the Roman See, under the enlightened and liberal dominion of the Ré Galantuomo Victor Emmanuel. Ages of division and of petty despotism have crushed her energies and exhausted her resources; but the blood of the ancient conquerors of the world still circulates in the veins of her citizens, and under the new order of things there is reason to hope that a bright destiny is in reserve for her.

The Oriental despotism which invaded Europe during the middle ages, and which has long maintained its sway at Constantinople, still curses Europe by its presence; but during the last sixty years it has become greatly shorn of its strength, and nothing but the mutual jealousy of the great powers of Europe has prevented its utter annihilation. Greece has been delivered from the Turkish yoke, and occupies the position of a quasi independent kingdom; but as it is debarred from the privilege of choosing its own rulers, and as it is kept in tutelage by the leading powers, its energies are restrained, and its aspirations for a higher life are suppressed, and there is reason to fear that long ages will elapse before she will attain to the dignity and influence which she once possessed, when her warriors and statesmen, her painters and sculptors, her poets and philosophers, commanded the admiration of the world.

The changes which have taken place in Asia, during the period which we are considering, have been less striking than those which have occurred in Europe; but, in estimating the

progress of the world, they are by no means to be overlooked. Russia has extended and consolidated its power over the northern regions of the great continent, and England has confirmed her sway over the teeming millions of Hindostan. China and Japan, whose exclusive policy had long shut them out from general intercourse with the world, have now taken their place in the family of nations, and have admitted the long excluded strangers to their shores. The light of civilization and the benign influences of the Christian religion have begun to dawn on them, and there is reason to hope that the darkness which has so long brooded over the Eastern Continent and the adjacent islands will soon be dispelled, and that the dwellers in those distant regions will share with their brethren of the West a higher intellectual culture and a purer religious faith.

Mexico and South America have been freed from the yoke of Spain and Portugal, and have established independent governments; but they have much to learn in the art of self-government before they can take their place by the side of our own country, or of the more enlightened countries of Europe. The recent attempts of France and Spain to establish European despotisms on this continent have failed so signally, that it is doubtful whether any similar attempts will be repeated.

The progress of the United States during the last sixty years constitutes one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of the world. At the commencement of this period the population was less than seven millions, nearly all of whom occupied the territory between the Alleghany Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. Kentucky and Ohio were then the only States west of the Alleghanies, and their joint population was less than half a million. Since that time the population of the country has increased to about thirty-seven millions; the States in the Valley of the Mississippi have increased from two to eighteen, and three new States have sprung up in the region between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The productive industry of our country has increased in a ratio far exceeding that of our population. In agriculture, in manufactures, in commerce, in mining, and in the mechanic arts, our progress has greatly exceeded that of any other nation during the same period. And as we have excelled in the arts of peace, we have shown no less capacity in the complicated operations of military and naval warfare. In the

war with England in 1812, and in the war with Mexico, our military prowess gained for us the respect and admiration of Europe. But in the late civil conflict, in which the forces of the nation were engaged in contending with a rebellion more gigantic than the world had ever before seen, when vast armies were engaged in mortal combat, when courage and endurance were put to the most severe test, and when our national resources were taxed to a degree almost unequaled in the history of the world, our ability as a warlike nation was demonstrated to the amazement of those who had exultingly predicted the downfall of the republic, and to the admiration of those who had sympathized with us in our struggle. And among the wonderful events connected with the history of the war and with its successful termination, there is nothing which has been more surprising to our friends and to our enemies than the vast pecuniary resources which the nation has freely contributed to sustain its government and to preserve its territorial integrity. In the results of this war, we have given to the nations of the earth a practical lesson of the greatest importance, viz., that the largest liberty is consistent with the most implicit obedience to law, and with the most energetic action in the defence of the national government, and that an earnest devotion to the arts of peaceful industry is the best preparation for the bloody arbitrament of war.

Having taken this brief and cursory view of some of the leading changes in the condition of the world which have taken place since the foundation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, let us review some of the changes which have occurred in the medical profession during the same period. This period has been characterized by an intense activity in the investigation of diseases, especially with reference to their pathological character, and to their diagnosis. Morbid anatomy has been studied with a zeal and success unknown at any former period. The microscope, in its improved form, has been very extensively and beneficially employed in the elucidation of minute histology, in its physiological and pathological relations. Physical diagnosis scarcely had an existence at the time when this College was founded. At that time, rational symptoms or disturbances of function were almost exclusively relied on in the diagnosis of disease. The application of the sense of vision to the investigation of diseased parts was almost unknown, except when the disease was located upon the

external surface of the body. The ocular inspection of the interior of the vagina, of the os uteri, and of the internal surface of the rectum, by means of the speculum, was unknown. The ophthalmoscope had not yet exposed to view the interior of the eye, and many of the diseases of that delicate and important organ were consequently unknown or very imperfectly understood. The otoscope was also unknown, and the morbid conditions of the meatus auditorius, and of the membrana tympani were not properly appreciated. The laryngoscope, the rhinoscope, and the endoscope, had not yet been introduced, and the data for judging of the diseased conditions of the larynx and trachea, the posterior nares and the urethra, were much less full and complete than they have become since the introduction of these valuable instruments. Sixty years ago, the practice of auscultation and percussion was almost unknown. Since that time, the sense of hearing has been brought into requisition as a most important means of diagnosis in affections of the heart and arteries, of the lungs, and of other organs.

The Materia Medica has undergone great improvements, not only by the introduction of many new and valuable remedies, but also by the employment of more efficient and reliable preparations of remedies which were previously in use. Among these improved preparations may be enumerated the vegetable alkaloids and their salts, and the fluid extracts. The Materia Medica of the present day is more simple, more definite, and more reliable than that of sixty years ago. But the greatest improvement of the Materia Medica has been the introduction of the class of anæsthetic vapors. The younger members of the profession, who cannot look back upon a period in their professional lives when the anæsthetic virtues of ether and chloroform were unknown, can scarcely conceive of the extent of the revolution in medical and surgical practice, occasioned by the introduction of these important agents. They cannot look back, as the senior members of the profession can do, upon the overwhelming horror with which patients approached the operating table, and upon the screams of agony which were wrung from the sufferers, as the instruments of torture penetrated the living and sensitive tissues of their bodies. Surgical operations have been in a great measure divested of their terrors by the introduction of that marvellous class of agents by means of which the patient is promptly brought into a state of

complete insensibility, from which he awakes to find that the dreaded operation has been completed without any consciousness on his part. Among the important improvements of the Materia Medica, may also be mentioned the hypodermic method of introducing remedies into the circulation, by which means their action is more promptly, more certainly, and more efficiently secured.

The practice of medicine has kept pace with the progressive improvements of physiology and pathology. The natural history of disease is better understood than formerly, and more reliance is placed on the vis medicatrix naturæ. And, as it is proper on all occasions to give even the devil his due, it is fair to acknowledge that the profession is somewhat indebted to homœopathy for a clearer insight into the powers of nature in the cure of disease. If patients, suffering from grave diseases, are found to recover while taking a millionth part of nothing as a remedy, it is not a very far-fetched conclusion that the credit of the cure is rather due to the vis medicatrix naturæ than to the practitioner who employs such inefficient remedies. But the recent improvements in practical medicine are not entirely of a negative character. In those forms of disease which, when left to themselves, have a strong tendency to a fatal termination, the use of active and even heroic remedies often becomes an absolute necessity in order to save life. The treatment of acute peritonitis by heroic doses of opium, as introduced by the distinguished professor of pathology and practical medicine in this College, is a familiar and pertinent example of this class of improvements.

The advancement which has been made in surgery, and in gynecology, during the last sixty years, is of a very decided character. This advancement is strikingly illustrated by the successful removal of ovarian and other intra-abdominal tumours; by the division of muscles and tendons for the cure of deformities; by the crushing of calculous concretions within the urinary bladder, and the subsequent removal of the fragments; by the successful application of ligatures to many of the large arteries of the body; by the improved methods of operating upon the eye and its appendages; by the application of the principle of extension in the treatment of diseased joints; and by many other ingenious and beneficial applications of science and skill to the removal of deformity and to the cure of disease.

But I should greatly transcend the appropriate limits of the

present occasion, were I to attempt to give you even a catalogue of the improvements which have been introduced in the different branches of our profession. In many of these improvements, the Alumni and the teachers of this College may say, "quorum magna pars fui." In every form of medical investigation they have acted a conspicuous part. In every branch of the healing art, they have been skillful and successful practitioners. In their devotion to the sick and the dying, they have shown a zeal and benevolence worthy of all admiration. They have firmly maintained their ground at the post of danger, and in numerous instances have become martyrs in the cause of science and humanity. And it is well that their Alma Mater should cherish their memory, and should record their names on the enduring marble, with the appropriate inscription, "hæc mea ornamenta sunt." In the late war in which our country was involved, the Alumni of this College accompanied the regiments of our advancing armies in all their long and tedious marches, in their fiercely contested battles, in their wearisome encampments, in their exposures to the stormy blasts of winter and to the burning heats of summer, in all their sufferings and in all their privations, that they might bestow upon them the benefits of their science and their skill.

For when our country called her sons to stand
And bare their bosoms at her stern command,
With hearts unmoved, to peril limb and life,
While bravely joining in th' impending strife,
Boldly to meet the unrelenting foe,
And strike for freedom a resistless blow;
With heart and hand to uphold her righteous cause,
To fight her battles and maintain her laws;
And when her sons, obedient to her word,
Rose in their might and drew th' avenging sword,
When patriot blood flow'd freely 'mid the clash
Of arms, and when the deadly rifle's flash
With power resistless sped the murderous lead,
And laid the soldier on his gory bed;
'Twas theirs with gentle art his wounds to bind,
T' assuage his pain, to cheer his drooping mind,
To stay the flowing blood, and to impart
New vigor to the faintly beating heart;
'Twas theirs, with gifts of science and of skill,
To turn away from him each threaten'd ill,

To watch beside his bed with tender care,
With earnest sympathy his griefs to share,
And from his couch of languishing and pain
To raise him to the joys of health again.

Having thus reviewed a few of the leading incidents which have occurred since the foundation of this College, let us cast our eyes upon the prospect which is before us. The science and the art of medicine are not yet complete. There are many arduous labors yet to be performed; there are many triumphs yet to be won; and I have no doubt that in the future, as in the past, the Alumni of this College will be found in the front ranks of those who are laboring to extend the bounds of our science, and to multiply and perfect the resources of our art. A large proportion of those who graduated during the first twenty years after the foundation of the College, have ceased from their earthly labors, and the few who remain must soon withdraw from active life. The younger Alumni must prepare to take their places; and as one generation shall succeed another, may the ranks of the Alumni of this Institution be ever full. May they never grow weary in their labors in the cause of science and of humanity; but following the illustrious example of those who have preceded them, may they fix their eyes upon the goal, being guided by the motto, "Macte virtute, sic iter ad astra."

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

Lectures.

Regular Course.

The Regular Course of Lectures for the Session of 1867–8 will commence on Monday, the 14th of October, 1867, and will continue until early in the following March. This course will consist of from five to six Daily Lectures in the various departments of Medicine and Surgery, both elementary and practical, together with Daily Clinical Lectures, delivered both at the College and at the larger Hospitals.

Summer Course.

The closing term will commence on the 9th of September, 1867, and continue till October 9th, when there will be a Preliminary Course, continuing till the commencement of the Regular Course. In the Lectures of the Summer and Preliminary Courses, the Faculty of the College will be assisted by other members of the Medical Profession.

Fees.

Matriculation Fee, $5.

Fees for the full Course of Lectures by all the Professors, $140; for each separate ticket, $20.

Ticket of the Demonstrator of Anatomy, $10.

Graduation Fee, $30.

Graduation.

Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine must have attended two full courses of Lectures—the *latter* in this College. They must have studied medicine three years, under the direction of a regularly authorized physician, and have attained the age of twenty-one years. Each candidate is required to write a medical thesis, and to deposit it with the Secretary of the Faculty. Full certificates of the time of study, of age, and of moral character, must also be furnished.

The examination of candidates takes place semi-annually; that for graduation in the Spring, early in March; in the Fall, on the second Tuesday in September.

Prizes.

Faculty Prizes.

Two Prizes are annually awarded by the Faculty, at the College Commencement in March, for the best two Graduating Theses presented during the year, viz.:—A First Prize of Fifty Dollars, and a Second Prize of Twenty-Five Dollars. The Theses competing for these prizes should be handed in to the Secretary of the Faculty, in the Fall, by the 1st of September; and in the Spring, by the 1st of February. At the Commencement in March, 1866, these prizes were awarded as follows:

Harsen Prizes,

Founded in 1859 *by* Jacob Harsen, M. D., *an Alumnus of the College.*

Three Annual Prizes are offered for the best three written Reports of the Clinical Instruction in the New York Hospital, during any four months of the year immediately preceding the Annual Commencement in March, which shall be prepared and presented by Students of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, viz.:

A First Prize of One Hundred and Fifty Dollars.

A Second Prize of Seventy-five Dollars; and

A Third Prize of Twenty-five Dollars.

With each prize there is conferred a Harsen Prize Medal, in bronze, of elegant design and workmanship, and an ornamental diploma on parchment.

Prize of the Alumni Association.

Two Hundred Dollars. Graduates of the College who desire to compete for this prize must send their Essays, with name in sealed envelope, to the committee appointed to make the award, Dr. Wm. H. Draper, 33 East Twelfth Street, or Dr. Wm. C. Roberts, 278 Fourth Avenue, on or before March 1, 1868.

Stevens Triennial Prize.

A Prize Fund of One Thousand Dollars has been established by Alexander H. Stevens, M. D., Ex-President of the College, for the improvement of medical literature, on the following plan:

Each prize, to be awarded triennially, is to consist of the interest yielded by the principal Fund during the preceding three years, and will amount to about two hundred dollars.

The administration of the prize is intrusted to a commission, consisting of the President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons (ex-officio); the President of the Alumni Association (ex-officio); and the Professor of Physiology (ex-officio), in the same Institution.

The following subjects have been selected, at the request of Dr. Stevens, for the first triennial prize under this Fund:

1st. The best means of preventing death after Surgical Accidents.

2d. The History of Improvements in the Medical Art, and the means by which they are attained.

The competing essays on either of the above subjects must be sent in to the President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, on or before the first day of January, 1869. Each Essay must be designated by a device or motto, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope, bearing the same device or motto, and containing the name and address of the author. The envelope belonging to the successful essay will be opened, and the name of the author announced at the Annual Commencement of the College, in March, 1869.

This Prize is open for universal competition.

The Annual Catalogues and Circulars of the College will be sent to all graduates who will leave their Post-office address with the Secretary of the Faculty, College of Physicians and Surgeons, corner of Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue, New York City.

OFFICERS

OF THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF THE

College of Physicians and Surgeons,

FOR THE YEAR 1867-68.

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JOHN L. VANDERVOORT, M. D.....New York.
ABRAHAM BLOODGOOD, M. D. .....Flushing, N. Y.

The Annual Meeting and Collation of the Association is held at the College the second Friday Evening in March, the Commencement being on the second Thursday Evening.

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